REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-5 and 26-29 are presently active; Claims 6-25 have been withdrawn by a Restriction Requirement, and Claims 1-3 and 5 have been presently amended, Claims 26-29 have been added by way of the present amendment. No new matter has been added.

In the outstanding Office Action, the claims were objected due to informalities. Claims 1-5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Iwasaki et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,174,881).

Regarding the objection to the claims, the claims have been amended to address the informalities. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the objection to the claims has been overcome.

Regarding the art rejection, Applicants submit that Iwasaki et al. relates to an apparatus for forming a thin film in which an interface structure between the semiconductor substrate and the thin film is reliably controlled (col. 1, lines 13 to 15).

More specifically, Iwasaki et al. discloses an apparatus for the formation of thin film having a loader chamber 40, a chamber 37 for pretreatment, a chamber 38 for the formation of thin film and an unloader chamber 41 (col. 18, lines 12 to 16). The chamber 37 for pretreatment and the chamber 38 for the formation of thin film are communicably connected together in a line (Fig..11). The loader chamber 40 and the unloader chamber 41 are communicably connected to the chambers 37 and 38 respectively and have carrier systems 27a and 27d such as belt conveyers provided respectively therein (Fig. 11). The carrier systems 27a and 27d carry a silicon substrate 4 on a tray 30 into and out of each of the chambers 37 and 38 (Fig. 11). The chambers 37 and 38 are evacuated to be in a high degree vacuum state (col. 18, line 68 to col. 19, line 2 and col. 19, lines 27 to 29). The loader

chamber 40 and the unloader chamber 41 are disposed in positions such as to form a line with the chambers 37 and 38 (Fig. 11).

In the chamber 37, a natural oxide film on the silicon substrate 4 is removed using a following reaction: $Si0_2+4HCl \rightarrow SiCl_4+2H_2O$ (col. 19, lines 10 to 14). The chamber 38 has a substrate supporting plate 5' comprising heating means 5a' (col. 15, lines 58 and 59).

Moreover, Iwasaki et al. also discloses an apparatus comprising a chamber 37 for pretreatment, a chamber 39 before the formation of film, and a chamber 38 for the formation of thin film (col. 17, lines 12 to 15). The chamber 39 before the formation of film is disposed between the chamber 38 for the formation of thin film and the chamber 37 for pretreatment and is communicably connected to the chambers 37 and 38 (Fig. 10). The chamber 39 has a carrier system 27b carrying a silicon substrate 4 into and out of each of the chambers 37 and 38 (Fig. 10).

According to Claim 1, a processed object processing apparatus includes first and second treatment systems that are communicably and adjacently connected to each other. A load lock system is communicably and adjacently connected to the second treatment system, and the load lock system has a transfer arm and a processed object holding part.

According to Claim 2, a processed object processing apparatus includes a chemical oxide removal (COR) treatment system and vacuum treatment system being communicably and adjacently connected to each other. A load lock system is communicably and adjacently connected to the vacuum treatment system, and the load lock system has a transfer arm and a processed object holding part.

By virtue of the unique configuration in amended Claims 1 and 2, special effects are provided that the operation of transferring the objects to be processed between the treatment systems can be simplified. Hence, a plurality of processes can be carried out efficiently.

On the other hand, while Iwasaki et al. discloses some features similar to those claimed, Iwasaki et al. neither discloses nor suggests two treatment systems being adjacently connected to each other and one load lock system being adjacently connected to one treatment system. That is, Iwasaki et al. neither discloses nor suggests only one load lock system being adjacently connected to one of the two treatment systems which are adjacently connected to each other.

Moreover, Iwasaki et al. neither discloses nor suggests a load lock system having a transfer arm and a processed object holding part, or a transfer arm transferring objects to be processed into and out of each of two treatment systems.

Accordingly, amended Claims 1 and 2 (and the claims dependent therefrom) are believed to be patentable over Iwasaki et al.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment and in light of the above discussions, the outstanding grounds for rejection are believed to have been overcome. The application as amended herewith is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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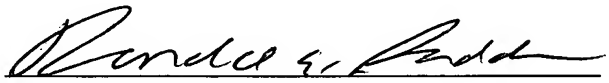

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